

The Weather

Today—Rain, high in the mid to upper 60s. The chance of rain is 50 per cent. Saturday—Partly cloudy, high in the upper 40s to mid 50s. Yesterday—Noon Air Quality Index, 22; Temperature range 71-42. Details B12.

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Lumumba, Castro

By George Lardner Jr.
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U.S. officials initiated plots to assassinate Congolese Premier Patrice Lumumba and Cuban Premier Fidel Castro and were involved in planned coups that resulted in the death of three other foreign leaders, the Senate intelligence committee reported yesterday.

The committee said it was unable to determine whether any President explicitly ordered any assassination activity by the Central Intelligence Agency, but that there was a strong chain of evidence suggesting that "the plot to assassinate Lumumba was authorized by President Eisenhower."

The 347-page report, made public after a rare secret session of the Senate, was more ambiguous about the plots against Castro under Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, but charged that the chief executives clearly failed in their duties to prevent such "undesired activities from taking place."

The three foreign leaders killed in coups or attempted coups with various degrees of U.S. backing were Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic who was murdered in 1961; Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam who was murdered in 1963, and Gen. Rene Schneider of Chile who was killed during a kidnapping attempt in 1970.

Quoting President Kennedy, who once

reportedly said, "We can't get into that kind of thing or we would all be targets," the committee concluded by proposing legislation that would make it a crime to kill or to conspire to kill foreign officials outside the United States in peacetime.

Made public despite the strenuous objections of President Ford and a reportedly intensive lobbying effort to suppress the document, the report emphasized that in no case did the CIA succeed in any of its death plots.

"It shows above all that Americans are no good at all at killing, lying and covering up and I'm glad that's the case," Sen. Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.) declared at a committee press conference.

It also showed schemes ranging from the ludicrous to the bizarre to the chilling.

For example, the report disclosed that on Nov. 22, 1963, the day President Kennedy was killed in Dallas, a high-ranking CIA officer, Desmond Fitzgerald, was meeting with a secret Cuban agent known as AM-LASH in Paris to offer him a poison pen rigged with a hypodermic needle, and "recommending that he use Blackleaf-40, a deadly poison which is commercially available."

A long-secret CIA Inspector General's report noted: "It is likely that at the very moment President Kennedy was shot, a CIA officer was meeting with a Cuban agent ... and giving him an assassination device for use against Castro."

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Plots Told

The pen, in any case, was never used. A CIA case officer present at the meeting was quoted as remembering that AM-LASH, a high-ranking Cuban who enjoyed Castro's confidence, did not "think much of the device" and complained that the CIA could "come up with something more sophisticated than that."

Other plans to assassinate Castro, the report said, involved the use of "poison cigars, exploding seashells and a contaminated diving suit," but these never got past the laboratory stage.

A CIA-Mafia plot to kill the Cuban leader, however, went further and apparently involved the procuring of potential assassins within Cuba and the delivery of poison pills to the island.

The CIA scheme against Lumumba, who was murdered by other elements in Katanga Province Jan. 17, 1961, was concocted in 1960 and, the report stated, "quickly advanced to the point of sending poisons to the Congo to be used for the assassination."

One Eisenhower White House aide, Robert Johnson, was quoted in the report as having understood the President "to have ordered Lumumba's assassination" at a National Security Council meeting Aug. 18, 1960, but the committee said there was an "ambiguity and lack of clarity" in the records that tended to contradict such evidence.

Although rich in detail, the report

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ASSASSINATE, From A1

repeatedly expresses the committee's frustration over its inability after a long investigation that piled up almost 10,000 pages of testimony to draw firm conclusions about who authorized the assassination plots.

Several committee members, however, made clear in supplementary statements that they thought it likely the schemes had the highest approval.

Sen. Howard H. Baker (R-Tenn.) said it was his view "that on balance the likelihood that Presidents knew of assassination plots is greater than the likelihood that they did not."

Sen. Robert B. Morgan (D-N.C.) said he had been impressed during the committee's secret hearings "by the belief held by the principals that those illegal and immoral acts engaged in by our intelligence agencies were sanctioned by higher authority and even by the 'highest authority.' I am convinced by the large amount of circumstantial evidence that this is true"

Yesterday's secret Senate session, which lasted nearly four hours, ostensibly was called to discuss the findings, but instead the meeting was devoted almost entirely to the question of whether to suppress the report or let it be made public as the committee had voted to do. Sen. Walter Huddleston (D-Ky.) said later he could not recall a single substantive question being put to committee members about the report itself.

The issue of publication never came up for a Senate vote and the committee's decision stood. Senate intelligence committee Chairman Frank Church (D-Idaho) and his colleagues were reportedly advised by Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) that the outcome might be a close vote that would not stand out as ringing support of the report's public release.

Both the Democrats and the Republicans on the 11-member Senate committee endorsed the report. The sole exception was Philip A. Hart (D-Mich.) who said he thought it might be "misleading" for him to sign it when illness had prevented him from attending the hearings.

However, the committee's ranking Republican, John G. Tower (Tex.), explicitly "disassociated" himself from the public release of the report and, along with Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), pointedly boycotted the committee press conference about its contents.

For his part, Church was critical of CIA Director William E. Colby's claims at a press conference Tuesday that publication of 12 names in the report might put these individuals in danger.

Church angrily denounced the suggestion as "absurd." Ticking off the names of the 12 men Colby had in mind, Church said they included onetime FBI agent Robert Maheu, who previously held a press conference to discuss his role; Henry Dearborn, former U.S. consul general to the Dominican Republic who was "in close and continuous contact with" the group that killed Trujillo and

who recently "identified himself in a letter to the editor of The Washington Post," and Lucien Conein, whose association with the South Vietnamese generals in the Diem coup was laid out in detail in the Pentagon Papers.

Church emphasized the committee had deleted the names of some 20 other persons after what seemed legitimate arguments had been advanced, but he strongly

defended the publication of the report as it was released yesterday.

"This report," he said, "reaffirms our belief in our system of government. It belongs to the people and the people are entitled to know what went wrong and why."

A major factor, the committee suggested, was the extreme, inherent ambiguity of the "executive command and control" system.

"This creates the disturbing prospect that assassination activity might have been undertaken by officials of the United States government without its having been incontrovertibly clear that there was explicit authorization from the President of the United States," the report noted.

"At the same time," the committee added, "this ambiguity leaves open the

possibility that there was a successful 'plausible denial' and that a presidential authorization was issued but is now obscured."

The senators also voiced special chagrin at the "circumlocutions" and "euphemisms" that turned up again and again in the course of the assassination inquiry.

According to one footnote concerning an Iraqi colonel that the CIA considered disabling in 1960 by means of a handkerchief containing some sort of chemical, the CIA reported that the scheme was never carried out because the colonel "suffered a terminal illness before a firing squad in Baghdad (an event which had nothing to do with) not very long after our handkerchief proposal was considered."